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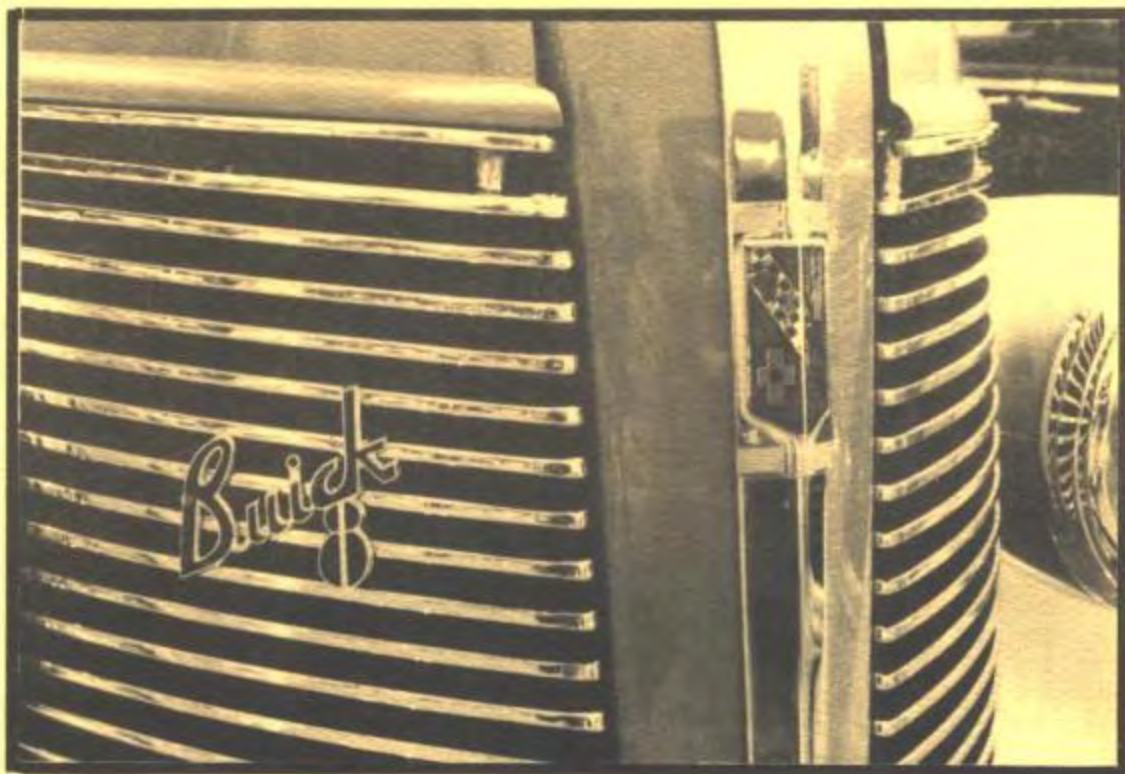
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# THE TORQUE·TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



**Volume XI • Number 1**



# THE TORQUE·TUBE

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OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



VOL. XI, NO.1

SEPT. 1992

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235



## Important News



It may surprise or even shock some of you to see from the Classified Ads in this issue that I am offering my '37 Roadmaster for sale. A good deal of thought went into this, and it does not mean that I am leaving the hobby, or that I will quit as Editor in the near future. To the extent it was not adequately restored when I bought it, I restored the car, not to be a perfectly-authentic trailered showpiece, but as a car to drive that would also show well. However, I have found that I am simply too busy with a variety of things — not the least of which is this Club — to drive it. Moreover, the truth is that I am bloody tired of driving. Over the past eight-plus years, I have been obliged to drive at least 25,000 miles per year, and some years considerably more. This has taken its toll on my back, my neck, my eyesight, and my mental outlook. When I bought my first '37, life was different, and I looked forward to driving cars. Now, no matter what the car is, it seems more of a chore than anything else. Most of the problems I have encountered with the Roadmaster over the past year or two — wheel bearing seals, brake cylinders, gunk in the carburetor and the like — were consequences of too much disuse. Someone should be driving the car and enjoying it, not just looking at it. It is a beautiful car to look at and I love it, but it will continue to decline if it just sits in my garage. If someone exercises it regularly, it will drive and run great. To complete the story, I must also say that I could use some cash, as it appears that I am not finished funding my children's education and may not be for a few more years.

This is the first ad for the car to appear. I hope that one of you will be able to purchase and use it, and that it will stay in the Club. I am not particularly anxious to put it in Old Car Weekly and see all those shit-kickers and be-backers again.

I said above that I do not propose to quit as Editor in the near future, and that is so. I must tell you, however, that I define "near" in terms of months, not years, and that I have made an irreversible decision that I must, and will, retire as Editor and Manager of the Club not later than January 1993. I have run this Club for eight years,

• FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS IN 1980 •



## • COVERS •



**FRONT COVER:** Another nice close-up shot by Harry Logan (#651); the car belongs to Chuck Van Koten (#388), of Napa, California.

**BACK COVER:** A striking 1938 convertible with custom body by a long-defunct Danish body builder. See the article by Erik Bjerring in this issue. (This and all of the other Danish Buick pictures herein are taken from the Veteran Car Club of Denmark's excellent publication Bilhistorisk Tidsskrift.)

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and that is probably more than enough for any person who wishes to retain sanity and half-way decent health. While I have the title of "Editor," as I have said many times before that is really a misnomer, as it by no means comprehends all of the necessary effort. That includes administrative manager, production manager, treasurer, meet planner, etc., etc., as well as author of the overwhelming majority of the 2,000-plus pages of material that have been published in the past eight years. Editing, in the sense of re-writing or cleaning up other people's material, is only a small part of the labor that has been expended. That is so because, despite my constant badgering, contributions of decent printable material have been relatively small. That a few members have sent in excellent, well-written (or even not-so-well-written) technical and human interest articles in the past three or four years cannot of course be gainsaid, but it really is only a few, perhaps no more than 20, or maybe 30, out of about 440 members. That is 7% at the outside. The remaining 93% of you have been inert, content at most with an annual "I like it" or "Keep up the good work" — a phrase that, however well-intentioned by its sender, annoys the hell out of me.

I have badgered you in the past, and each time I do a few things come in. I use these up, then badger again, and the process is repeated. Some people told me three, or four, or five years ago that they would do something, for which I am still waiting. "Some day" they may do it, but one has reason to be dubious. I am now very tired of all of this.

Some years ago, when I was interested in photography, I subscribed to one of the popular photography magazines. After about five years, I began increasingly to notice that there was nothing new; I was reading the same stuff, perhaps re-hashed a bit, over and over. Thus it probably inevitably is with any "hobby" publication: there is some limit on what can usefully be said about anything, and I am now at the limit of original material I can create about '37 or '38 Buicks or even of subjects related in some way or other. I must inevitably repeat myself. To those who have complained (if that be the right word) about the reprinting of articles from the past: you miss the point. I have not done that to benefit new members who have not seen the stuff — although that may be a virtue of the reprinting — but rather because I have nothing else to print. This is especially true of technical matter: I am not a professional car restorer, or an engineer, or anything close. I am only a lawyer who happens to know something about cars and can write in complete sentences, but there is a hell of a lot I do not know, and likely cannot or will not ever learn.



I am well aware that some of you simply are not writers, but I refuse to believe that characterizes 90% of you. Yes, I know, you are all "too busy." Is that so? Well, consider this: over the past eight years, I have expended at least 60 hours a month on the Club or 720 hours per year. In the big law firms, a professional is considered good if he or she turns in at least 2000 "billable" hours per year. I have given you one-third of that, without a bill. In addition, I have a Real Job, spend two hours per day commuting back and forth to it, single-handedly maintain about one-third of an acre and an eight-room house in livable and presentable, if not showcase, condition, devote some time to BCA affairs, and go about all the other little businesses of life. As a long-sustained effort, this is too much; it has had a very gradual but nevertheless real effect on my health. There have been too many deadlines and "must-dos" and I need now, at age 57, to plan to recapture more of my life for other things, or simply to sit on my fat ass, before the inevitable impacts of stress, already increasingly creeping up on me, begin to deteriorate me any more.

I can assure you that I do not regret anything. On balance, I must say that I have enjoyed rejuvenating the Club, running it, writing all — or at least most — of what I have written, researching questions, putting on a few meets, composing this publication, and all the rest. (At least some of the time, my secretary has even enjoyed typing it, and her labors must be added to those of my own from which the Club has benefited.) I have learned a lot, and I have made many good friends, literally around the world. All of this is of great value to me. Your thanks have been of great value to me as well; however, as heartfelt and sincerely given as these thanks may be, they are, plainly enough, insufficient to get this publication out nine times per year, or to wring more from my brain and pen than can reasonably be expected to be wrung therefrom.

The "bottom line" is this, friends: I am now close to ultimate "burn out," and the whole business is nowhere near the fun it used to be. The Club needs to move deliberately but purposefully toward the infusion of "new blood" and the taking-over of its affairs by new people who can bring some enthusiasm, and perhaps some fresh

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*This photo was taken at the BCA 1989 National Meet in Batavia, New York. Six "Attaboys" to the person(s) correctly identifying the owner of that beautiful '38 40-C, who, respecting the perfection of its every detail, described himself as "obsessive and compulsive."*

approaches, to its affairs and to this publication. I have had my ups and downs before, but my present view is a much more deep-seated one than the doldrums and fits of petty annoyance and peevishness of the past. It has been building for some time, and I now see very clearly that I will do both myself and you a great disservice if I try to force myself to continue for very much longer.

This position is not subject to change, and you will waste your time attempting to dissuade me. You may have expected me to continue ad infinitum, perhaps to put the finishing touches on my last issue with one hand as I held the Grim Reaper at bay with the other, and if so, I am truly sorry to disappoint you. However, if things are viewed in the cold light of reality, there was and is no sound reason for such an expectation.

I hope, and fully expect, that an orderly transition can take place within the next four months or less. I have a few ideas about how that might be accomplished, but it will of course depend upon other persons volunteering. Ideally, the responsibilities should be shared among a small group of people who live close by, but geographic closeness is not essential. I can and probably will continue to contribute on a periodic basis. It may be that the frequency of publication of The Torque Tube will need to be reduced to six or perhaps only four issues per year, and the present expiration dates of memberships extended to compensate for that. Such a schedule would bring us more in line with other "amateur," volunteer-run clubs of our size, none of which that I know about can publish 300-plus pages of useful material per year. It may also be, however, that we have said all there is usefully to say. I am open to, and welcome, constructive suggestions as to what may be done. Constructive suggestions do not include mere pleas for me to change my mind; it will not be changed. Likewise, they do not include suggestions on what I might do to make my life easier; there have been enough of those in the past, none were of any practical value, and I am tired of them.

I believe there is within the current membership ample talent and ability to continue its existence as a unique organization, which I have termed "The World's Biggest Little Car Club." That talent and ability must now be found and focused. If I am the sine qua non of the Club's existence, then it does not deserve to live on. It is your Club, not mine. If no acceptable volunteers have stepped forward by this coming winter, I will fold my tent and distribute the Club's funds pro-rata to the members.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the timing of this message comes so soon after most of you have been called upon to renew your memberships, for as much as three more years. There is nothing insidious in this; it is simply coincidence. At the time the renewal notices went out, my thoughts had not yet taken final shape, and there would have been no alternative but to send out the notices in any event.

Let us now turn to that subject.



As of the first week of September, responses to the renewal notice/roster info forms sent out in mid-August appeared quite heavy, and I had fallen far behind in opening, sorting and classifying them, and updating the expiration dates. I expect that, by the time you read this, I will have spent at least one day of the Labor Day weekend engaged



in this. To say that it is boring understates the business considerably; the best that can be said is that it only happens once a year.

The new forms designed by Jim Flack seem so far to have been well-received and to have presented no problems. I expect you are all glad to have the basic info already printed out for you, and my thanks go again to Jim for pulling us slowly but surely into the Computer Age. My own abilities respecting computers may exceed those possessed by the Pygmy Tribes of Africa, but even if so, not by much.

### CORRECTION

The car pictured on page 3 of Vol. X, No. 9 and there identified as belonging to Paul Clark (#774) actually belongs to John Rainney (#916). Paul did win the "People's Choice." I got confused because it was reported to me that Paul had "the green car." The Rainney car is also green — a rather eye-catching, albeit non-authentic, shade that John says was applied by a former owner.

### BACK ISSUES

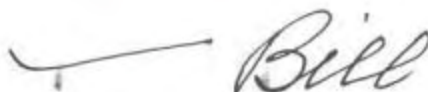
New members are advised that I have copies of all Vol. X issues (Nos. 1-9; Sept. 1991 - July 1992). These are \$3.25 each, postpaid in the U.S.; overseas mail varies considerably in postage depending upon location, but \$4.25 each is a fair average. (I can handle only U.S. dollar payments.) Paul Culp (#508) has copies of some earlier issues; contact him for availability and pay him directly.

An index of the material that was published in Vol. X should appear in the next issue.

### MAILING LABELS

For this and probably the next issue, some mailing labels will retain the old '92 expiration dates. That is because the label program has not caught up with the renewals. Do not call or write about this; it will be corrected in due course.

One of you borrowed a paint chip chart from me. Unfortunately, I forgot to write down the name of the borrower. I think it is now past time for the chart to be returned. Whoever you are, I would appreciate getting it back pronto.

 Bill



NEW CLUB T-SHIRTS AND HATS. THEY'RE NEAT! COOL!  
SEE THE CLASSIFIED AD PAGES AND GET YOURS TODAY!



Courtesy of Harry Logan (#651) and Charles Jekofsky (#524), here are two interesting photos from the past. Charles' mother and father pose with their '38 Century coupe, circa 1940; how about that Persian Lamb coat, ladies? In the bottom picture, taken a few months ago, Charles and his father pose with a restored '38 coupe.





# BUICKS IN DENMARK



*A 1937 convertible sedan engaged in what appears to be a road rally or hill climb in Denmark, some years ago. Those were the days!*

**By Erik Bjerring (#654)  
Helsingør, Denmark**

Recently, I came across two issues of the publication of the Danish Veteran Car Club "Bilhistorisk Tidsskrift", which contain some material I think will be of interest to our members. One contains photographs of numerous Buicks from 1908 through 1940 in Denmark, and the other, published in 1980, an article that features a very interesting custom-bodied 1938 convertible.

The title of that article is "How did it happen? - or, yet another way to remain poor." The author, Benny Ahlburg, describes the various antique cars he has collected and restored and, concerning the '38, goes on to say:

"Finally in 1975 the day came when the doors of a garage were opened and there she stood, with her pointed nose, large fenders, and, more important, the fulfillment of my youthful fantasies of a 'ragtop' — which of course was then in the open position.

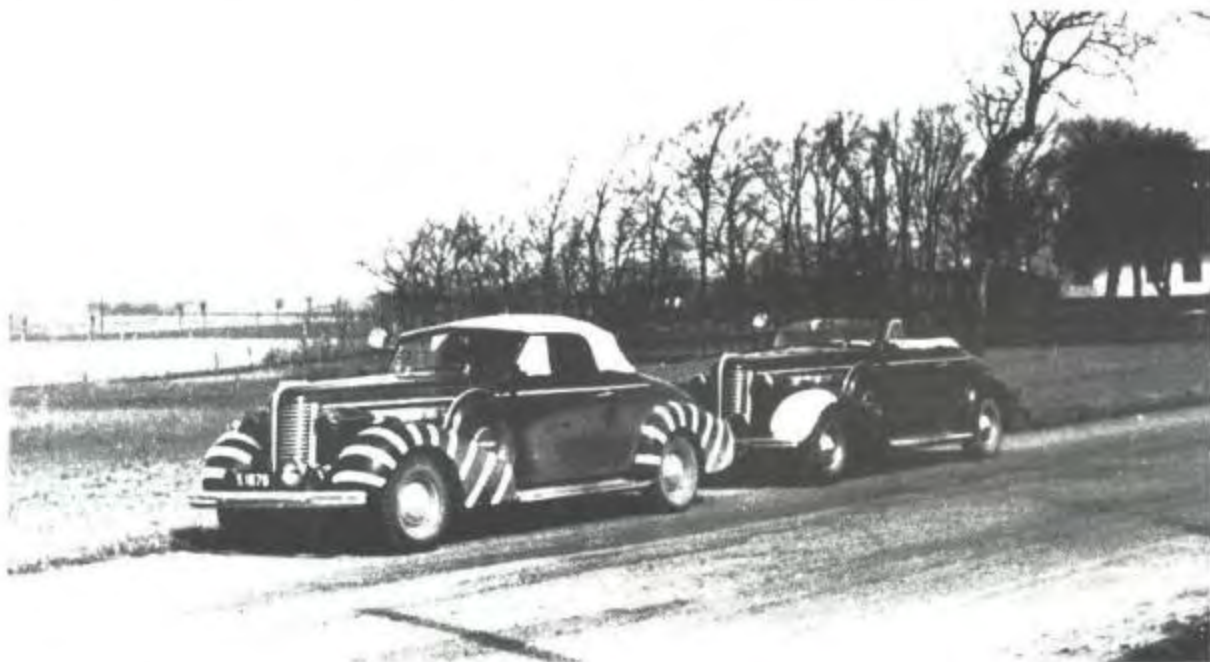
"Simply, she was more than all the Singers, Morris'es and MGs we had dreamed about but never could obtain — here it (the dream) was projected up to truly American dimensions. The purchase was done and the restoration begun, and — as with all old girls — it would go on and on.

"But with good friends' help — especially a retired mechanic who had passed his mechanic's degree in 1938 on a '38 Buick — we came to the day when the old girl again was deemed fit to roll on public roads as No. EZ43073. A new era dawned and I discovered the joy of having a real automobile in my hands.

"The history of the Buick is, as with many beautiful creatures, full of dark spots. From tracing the numbers it was learned that the car was first registered on April 4, 1938 under the number K1720. This suggested a past with the traffic police, but inquiries at the Police Historical Society could only confirm that although the police had had a number of '38 Buick convertibles, they were of the U.S. (Fisher Body) type.

"It is likely that the body of my car was built by a Danish custom-body company, but which one? The only indication is that, on the inside of the door upholstery panel was written 'Taastrup Karosserifabrik! No one recalls such a company. However, apparently at least two more are in existence."

The author goes on about having talked to two other owners. I know one of them, and have seen his Buick, and as I recall it has a German "Glaeser" body. We also know from our Danish police car pictures, where the registration numbers are visible, that K1720 — although near — was not a police vehicle. (See Vol. IX No. 9.) As an illustration of what the police cars looked like, the article also shows a picture of two '38 Buicks in 1941 war-paint (air-raid black-out or camouflage stripes).



*This shows two of the '38 Century convertibles used by the Danish National Traffic Police, as described in Vol. IX, No. 9, as they appeared in 1941. The headlights are blacked-out. German occupation of Denmark had already begun at that time, and clearly the unusual paint schemes, which were not used in earlier years, had some connection with the war.*





The two-tone paint scheme looks as though it belongs on this body. Unlike the Italians, whose folding tops were flimsy or non-existent, the Germans and Scandinavians employed convertible tops that offered solid protection against winter weather, but did not fold up into a very small package.



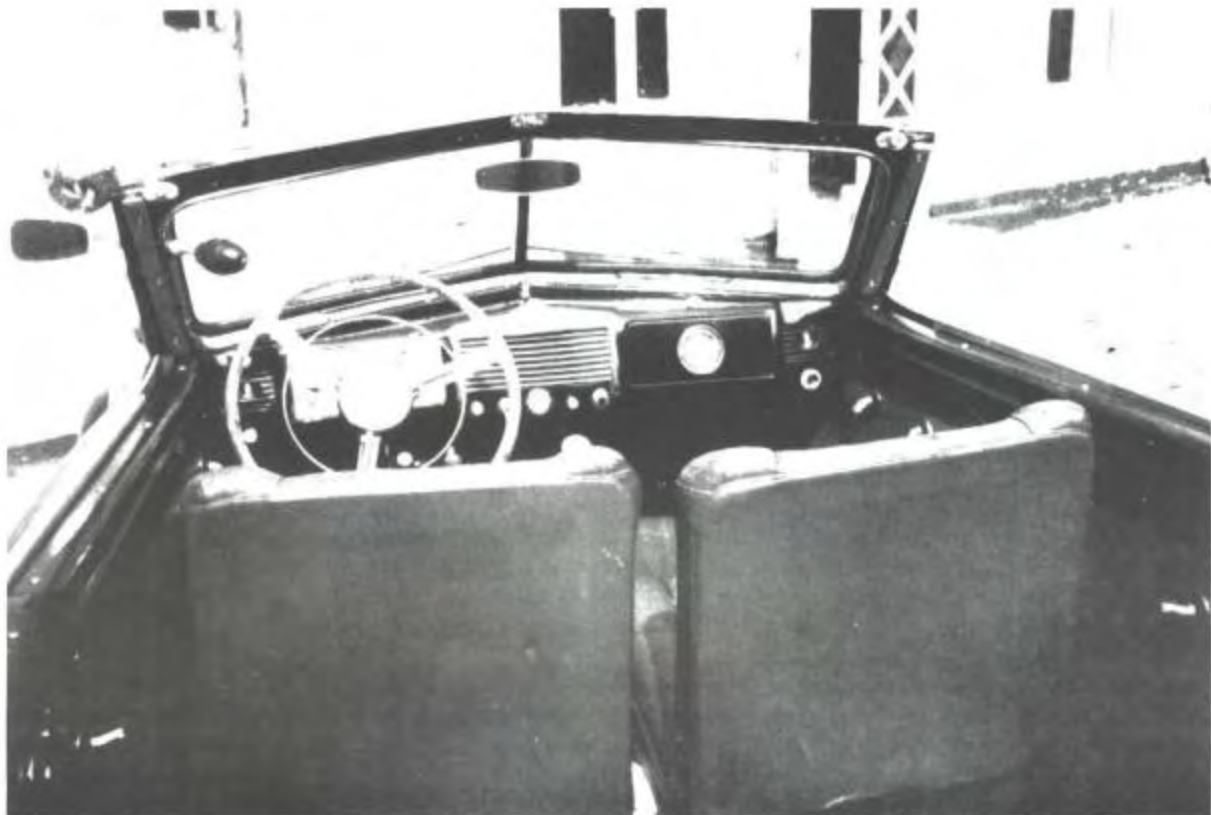
At first, when I looked at the pictures of the Benny Ahlburg Buick, I thought "Here is another Swedish Nordberg body" — I have a hard time telling which of them is the most elegant — but a comparison shows substantial differences. (For views of a Nordberg four-door convertible, see the article by Mats Ahrin (#786) in Vol. IX, No. 5.) Benny Ahlberg, with whom I spoke in order to get his permission to send this material to the Club, which he kindly gave, says that further research after the article was written confirmed that it indeed was a body made by the now-forgotten "Taastrup" body company.

Unfortunately, the car is not in Denmark any longer, as is the case with so many other of the gems from our automotive past. Financially strong foreign enthusiasts sweep up the really interesting cars. In this case, K1720/EZ43073 went to Germany.

There is now a strong export and import of interesting cars, not only between countries, but also between continents. As just one example, I have my '38 convertible which came from Maine in the U.S.A. and a 1927 Buick touring car which I bought in Australia.



*Erik Bjerring's 1938 model 46-C, which he purchased through this publication, I believe from former member Jon Lee of Bath, Maine. As I recall things, Jon believed firmly in not challenging the Principle of Harmonious Decrepitude, even to failing, for some long time, to remove a mouse nest from inside the valve cover. Considerable restoration, including a repaint in Botticelli Blue, was thus needed once the car arrived in Denmark.*



Interior view of the Taastrup "cabriolet" shows a '38 version of "bucket" seats. Unlike British Empire cars, Buicks in Denmark, Germany and most other European nations had left-hand drive, as these countries always drove on the right.

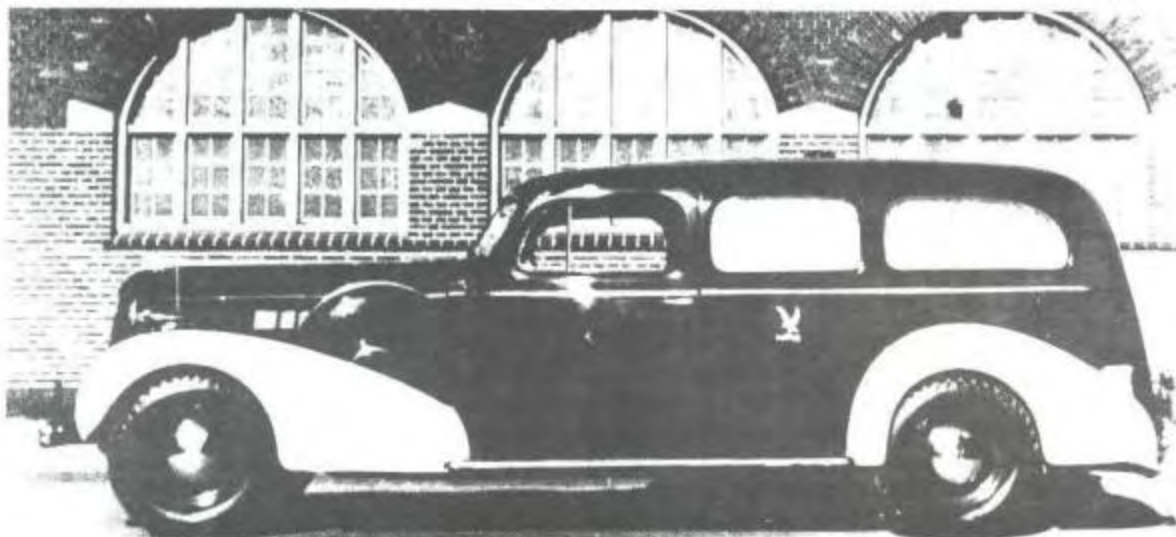


Side view of the Taastrup Buick. All of the body aft of the cowl has been re-done. A plain trim strip (not fluted as on the factory body) has been applied to the body side -- this may or may not have been on the car originally. Note also that the vent windows have been eliminated.





Ambulances were made on Buick chassis in Europe as well as in the U.S. These two photos show the work of the custom body firm Norrebro in Denmark. Apparently the rear doors were eliminated.



Four photos from Denmark, taken some time ago. The rather weary '37 60-C shown at the upper left was once owned by Erik Bjerring. Erik sold it to Leif Lundin (#933) in Sweden, in order, Erik says, to raise some capital for the restoration of his '38 46-C. The Danish text accompanying these photos says that inasmuch as only 410 Century "phaetons" were built, of which 11 were exported, it is "incredible" that two survived in Denmark. Considering five years of German occupation and the other impacts of World War II, as well as the mere passage of time, one must agree. The '37 sedan was purchased new by a Danish bank. The '38 shown at the lower right is another example of a Taastrup "cabriolet" body. If you look carefully, you will see that each of these cars is fitted with the European "flipper arrow" turn signals, just ahead of the front doors.







# Cheap? Crazy?



## A Letter from New Hampshire

By Ed Elkinson (#749)

22 Hemlock Street  
Rochester, New Hampshire 03867  
July 22, 1992

Mr. William E. Olson  
842 Mission Hills Lane  
Columbus, Ohio 43235

Bill:

\* \* \*

Some people might consider me cheap, others might consider me crazy; but my son and I have done every bit of the restoration work from fabricating sheet metal panels to taking a welding course at the local technical school or college (my son) and welding in the panels. The body was lifted off the frame, patches were welded to the inner rocker panels; the frame and all running gear was dismantled, cleaned, and painted before assembly. Patches were welded to the fenders, a floor was welded into the trunk as well as the front passenger compartment, and panels were hand fabricated for the storage area in the rear of the trunk as well as the panel beneath the trunk lid. So we can take total ownership for the quality of the work and can't blame anybody for any mistakes.

The car has three gallons of Centari Acrylic Enamel on the exterior as well as the interior of the car. This was put over a base of lacquer primer-filler and Velva Seal sealer. We had stripped the car using two gallons of airplane stripper. The paint has been color sanded with 1000 grit Wet-or-Dry sand paper, buffed with polishing compound and finished with swirl remover and a sponge pad. We are very quickly approaching the moment of truth when we start the re-assembly of the car. I still have to buy the rubber products and based upon your previous recommendation, I'll be ordering the parts from Steele very soon.

I've sent parts out for chrome plating and am sorry I didn't do it as the first thing instead of the last as the prices are astronomical. A friend of mine did a 1936 Buick convertible coupe a number of years ago and invested \$1200 for all the chrome work including the bows. I've already exceeded that and the grill as well as all the interior chrome has yet to be done. Our concern for the environment will continue to escalate the prices for plating at a significantly faster rate than the rate of inflation. Therefore, the basis for my recommendation.



I like to think of us as thrifty independent "Yankees" that can do anything we set our minds to and can get by with a minimum of external help. With the exception of the welding courses, neither my son nor I have had any auto body or auto mechanic training. Yet, I think we have demonstrated that given enough time (about 18 years with a five year break when we moved to another house which required modifications and a 1 year hiatus while we built a 5 car garage) and patience, anybody can acquire the skills necessary to complete a restoration.

Yes, the garage, 30' x 36', stick built from scratch with a 26' long pit, was built by my sons and I when my wife told me she had enough scraping of New Hampshire ice and snow and wanted the attached garage for our daily drivers. Even my wife helped by staining the clapboards before they were installed. She also helped put the second coat of stain on the building the following summer. This project was significantly quicker as it only took us 5 months to close it to the weather to include the exterior siding and the rest of the year to finish insulating, sheetrocking and painting the interior. A contractor was used for the excavation as well as the concrete foundation and floor. Here however, I have to admit that I was trained as a electrician when I attended a trade school for my secondary school education and did acquire some building trades knowledge.

A couple of belated comments to some questions that you posed in previous issues of the Torque Tube. I do enjoy looking at pinups and cheesecake pictures in the Torque Tube and highly encourage the publication of them when they are available. It looks like we have a number of things in common including deriving our livelihood from the utility industry, albeit, mine is as a vendor supplying it with kilowatthour meters as opposed to being an employee. I am also in favor of continuing the availability of the club roster. Although I have never used it, I can see some benefits that can be derived from a register.

I'd also like to express my appreciation for the effort that you put into the Torque Tube each and every issue. There is no doubt that this requires a great deal of dedication on your part to continue this thankless task (my opinion) and it's unfortunate that the club membership has not responded to your plea for help for stories and other articles that you can publish. However, I can relate to your problems in trying to obtain some help as I have also had to deal with apathy in the Boy Scouts, Credit Union and employees association that I have been involved with in the past. Furthermore, I can't fault others when I've not made a contribution either.

I'm sure that you believe each and every member has an anecdote or experience associated with his car that would be of interest to the club and worthy of publication and I expect you would be right. The question of course is: how do you overcome the reluctance of people to document their stories and send them in to you? I don't have an answer and I know that my leisure time is so limited that I can't even finish the Buick and Thunderbird sections of Hemmings before the next issue is in the mailbox. One of these days I'll have the extra time to dedicate to the restoration of cars as well as my other interests.

Best regards,



Ed Elkinson



EDITOR'S NOTE: I would not consider Ed Elkinson "cheap," just thrifty — there is of course a considerable difference. As for "crazy," just as there is a fine line between bravery and foolhardiness, so there may be a fine line between dedicated single-mindedness of purpose and lunacy. I prefer to apply the former label, and certainly a healthy dose of stubbornness may not be bad when it comes to "project" cars. In the hands of most of us, and surely in mine, Ed's '38 Special would long ago have been sold for whatever it might fetch, or parted out. We must give thanks that it will ultimately be resurrected. Given enough time and patience, anybody, or at least almost anybody, can do it. Being a "thrifty independent 'Yankee'" (Ed lives in New Hampshire) may help a little, but my observations suggest that no geographic area has a monopoly on such virtues, and I hope some of you may be inspired by Ed's story.



## NEW MEMBERS



Ashton P. Sawyer (#963)  
HC 81-Box 4430  
W.Newfield, ME 04095  
207/793-2258  
'37 46-C

Von Hardesty (#964)  
2317 N.Monroe St.  
Arlington, VA 22207  
703/276-7579

Frank Breckenridge (#965)  
5011 Olive Dr.  
Concord, CA 94521  
685-9258  
'37 81-F

Jack Rowe (#155)  
9570 Kies Rd.  
Manchester, MI 48158  
313/428-8734  
'37 41 '37 47

Roger Sornsen (#966)  
1407 Commons Dr.  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
916/922-0478  
'37 46

John A. Soltis (#967)  
246 Koffels Circle  
Harleysville, PA 19438  
215/256-4326  
'38 41

W. G. Whyte (#968)  
Clerk's Acre, Lodgehill Rd.  
Nairn IV12 4SZ  
SCOTLAND, U.K.  
(0667) 52201

Arthur A. Hoffman (#969)  
182 Oldfield Ave.  
Amityville, NY 11701  
516/598-1708  
'37 44

Daniel L. Carlson (#970)  
10154 West P.Q.Ave.  
Mattawan, MI 49071  
616/375-2658  
'37 41

David W. Pitzer (#971)  
7807 Lancaster Rd.  
Bartonville, IL 61607  
309/697-4214  
'37 46-S

Jim Merritt (#972)  
8402 Acorn Dr.  
Roseville, CA 95746

Russ Hiltz (#973)  
370 S.Harston St.  
Napa, CA 94559  
707/252-4902  
'38 41

Ray Fowler (#974)  
3122 Amherst Ave.  
Burlington, NC 27215  
919/584-1231  
'38 41

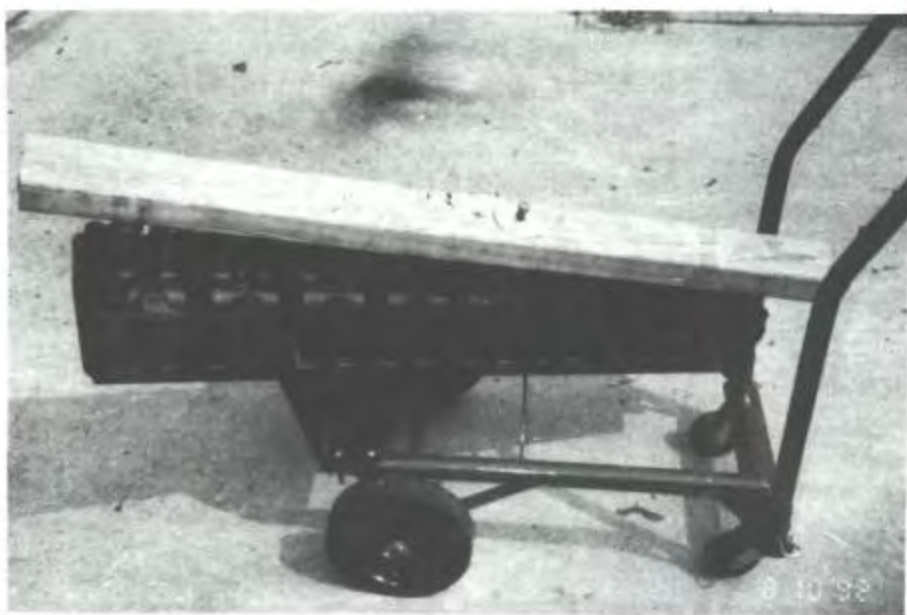
### NEW ADDRESS

Dennis Lander  
175 S.Abbe Rd.  
Elyria, OH 44035

Ronald Vellekoop  
215 Water St.  
Danville, PA 17821



# TECHNICAL TIPS



## REMOVING CYLINDER HEADS: A CREATION OF THE BRAIN

By Gene McCoy (#573)

I wanted to rebuild the cylinder head and replace the piston rings on my '37-61. I did not remove the hood. Here's how:

I took a 2"x4"x48" board and drilled a 7/16" hole in the center 22" from one end. This hole accepted a 3/8"-16 x 5" bolt with 2 washers 2" in diameter under the head of the bolt. This bolt was threaded into a rocker arm bracket hole near the center of the cylinder head. Rocker arm assembly removed, of course. After removing the head bolts, leaving the two studs on the left side of block in place, I carefully pried the head up off the engine and placed a couple of spacers between head and block so that I could remove the studs with a pipe wrench without ruining their threads. With a 2"x6"x66" placed between the head and block and the other end placed on the fender covers on top of the left front fender, the head was lifted onto the floor. After rebuilding the head, replacing piston rings, etc. we proceeded to replace the head. I put the 2 studs in place, a new head gasket and now the 2"x6" board extended from the left front fender above the head gasket across to the right front fender. We slid the head back into the engine compartment and with one person on each side of the car lifting the head, a third person pulled out the 2"x6" and rotated the cylinder head around, finding the studs and guiding it into place. **EASY**

I would think this will work on any model of the 1937. I know the 1938 hood is different and may require a different procedure. I must give credit for this procedure to my neighbor, friend and fellow-hobbyist.

My other creation was a jig to hold the cylinder head allowing you to remove the valves, valve springs and guides and lap in the new valves. This is a 2"x6"x35-3/4" with a 2"x4"x6" block screwed on at 1-1/4" from either end and a 1"x4"x6" block screwed in at 18" from the end to hold the center of the cylinder head.

These dimensions will work for the large series; possibly someone will be able to give the dimensions for the small series cylinder heads.

## WOODGRAINING; DASH AND MOLDING TREATMENTS

Several members have asked me if I have any material or advice on do-it-yourself woodgraining, or whether I know of any specific people who have done this successfully. I don't. I do remember seeing cars with, shall we say, non-professional woodgrain jobs, and I am sure some of you have undertaken to do your own, with results that may or may not have been satisfying.

I also know that there is a little book by one Terry Dunham which suggests methods of doing woodgraining using printer's ink. This is now quite old, but may be available from some book dealers.

I do not wish to denigrate the efforts of those who have done their own, or to make them feel inferior. In many cases, presumably, the owners are happy, and that is the main thing. I need to tell you, however, that in my opinion, virtually every "amateur" woodgraining job I have seen is plainly just that, and falls short of what I would consider acceptable. An otherwise excellently-restored interior can suffer noticeably if the dash and garnish moldings do not look right. (For those new to the game, the stamped metal pieces that surround the windshield and windows are called "garnish moldings." I am not sure why this term was used, but "garnish" in the sense of adornment or decoration, not of what happens to your wages if you don't pay your child-support, is what is intended, so "garnish" is not limited to the pieces of parsley or inedible cabbage leaves they throw on your dinner plate at Elby's.)

Woodgraining that duplicates exactly the look and color of the original is simply not possible today. Special plates were used in succession to apply the pattern to primed metal, which was then shaped in presses after the pattern was applied. The best we can hope for is something that replicates this as closely as possible and gives an overall visual impression that seems "right." In my judgment, achieving this result is truly an art that requires an innate talent as well as considerable practice. Many of us could probably learn to weld steel skillfully enough to install patch panels, especially now when modern apparatus and materials make the job far easier than in the past. Far fewer of us, I suspect, could learn to do first-class woodgraining no matter how hard we tried.

Thus, as I have in the past, I urge you to seek the services of a capable professional for woodgraining if you want a really first-class restoration. If funds are a problem, have your dash done, paint the moldings brown and save them for a later time when you can afford it; they are easily-enough removed and put back in.

The question is: who are the "capable professionals"? We have identified a few in the past (see e.g. Vol. IX, No. 7), but I am now very pleased to announce that we have one who is a member of the Club.

Lauren Matley (#46) who as some of you know developed our paint formulas several years ago, has been doing woodgraining on a small-scale basis for some time. Last year, Lauren sold his paint business and is now preparing to do woodgraining on a full-time basis. His business card appears in the ad pages of this issue. Lauren sent me a sample



of his work, which looked very good. Price can vary substantially depending upon the car, but in any case you will save money and get a better job if you strip and properly prepare the surfaces in advance. Lauren can also spot-repair and restore woodgrained pieces that are not badly worn. Send for his information package.

Matley Woodgraining  
3119 E. Spyglass Drive  
Vancouver, WA 98684

Before we leave this subject for now, it may be worth noting again that 1937 80 and 90 series cars did not have woodgrained dash panels, and had three different garnish molding treatments, black, gray, or woodgrain depending upon the purchaser's order or the interior fabric used. The dash boards in these cars were painted "Lustre Light Grey" and then a "transfer" was applied to the two raised panels between the vertical chrome strips. This transfer had a brownish ground color overlain by many little looping lines in gold. A former member (Tom Alderink) was able to duplicate this through silk-screening on decal film, but the decal turned out to be extremely difficult to apply successfully. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that '37 80 and 90 series dashboards are welded in place and cannot be removed from the car. If the decal could have been laid down horizontally things would have gone better, but there was no way to do this short of tipping the car up on its nose.

So, we are still not out of the woods with '37 80 and 90 series dash panels. To my mind, the whole "factory" scheme for these cars was odd: to have black or woodgrained moldings combined with a light gray and brown dash, to which is added another shade of brown on the steering column, presents something of a color hodge-podge without a unifying theme. If I were doing a '37 Roadmaster from scratch today, I might well forget about the raised-panel transfers on the dash and do the whole business in gray. At least then most everything would match.

"Lustre Light Grey" is a color that eluded us for some time. I have never seen a chip, or sample, or formula of any kind for it. Ultimately, through the efforts of the Editor and John Huffman (#623) and some pure luck, it was determined through use of the hidden, unfaded portion of an original panel, that a 1987 (and probably other years) VW color called "Polar Silver" is almost a dead-ringer for "Lustre Light Grey." If my wife had bought a different color car, this would not have happened! 1937 Roadmaster and Limited garnish moldings were either "Lustre Light Grey," or black, or "Mahogany" (woodgrain). The treatment used was indicated by a letter punched into the firewall identification plate: "G" (grey); "B" (black); or "M" (mahogany).

To complete what is in this respect another re-hash of old matter, it may also be noted that some 1938 60, 80 and 90 series cars also had a painted dash, to which was applied a "chevron"-patterned transfer. These cars were probably (or at least possibly) early '38 production. (See the excerpt from "Engineering Features of the 1938 Buick" reproduced below.) Other cars had a mahogany or walnut woodgrain dash. Inasmuch as there is no way today to duplicate the "chevron," this is the treatment the restorer must of necessity employ.

## FRONT COMPARTMENT EQUIPMENT AND FITTINGS

(Illustration 31)

The instrument board is completely redesigned with a more attractive grouping of the instruments, greater accessibility of the controls, wider

INSTRUMENT  
PANEL AND  
FITTINGS

spaced horizontal radio grille bars, and novel and original treatment of the finish. On the Series Forty it is a new grain transfer finish to match

INSTRUMENT PANEL  
(SERIES 40)

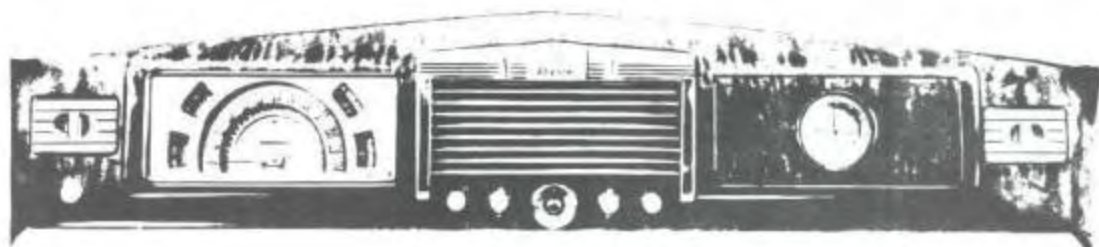


Illustration No. 31

the garnish mouldings. On the Series Sixty, Eighty and Ninety the finish is a combination of painted and distinctive design transfer.

The center section is recessed to take the radio grille, and the improved dome shaped control knobs placed just below the grille. Here they are not only more accessible, but are out of the way.

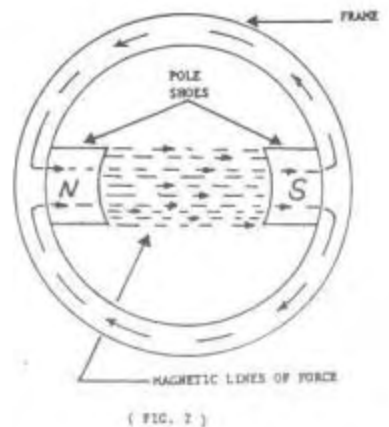
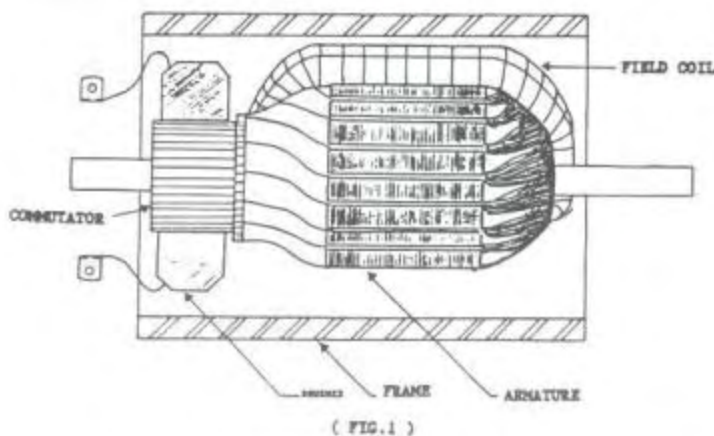


EDITOR'S NOTE: The reprinting of earlier material necessarily continues, whether some of you like it or not. The following article appeared in The Torque Tube several years ago, and has also appeared in Skinny Knuckles. Even if you have read it before, however, it may well be worth reading again. The author, Ron Lekse of RBR Electronics, has been mentioned in these pages before, as the manufacturer of the VR-6 electronic voltage regulator for antique cars. The article devotes some space to describing this product, and this is of course a form of free advertising for Ron's business. Considering the effort and knowledge required to write the article, however, as well as his making it available gratis to car club publications, this seems reasonable enough to me. I will emphasize again that I have no financial interest in RBR Electronics, and am printing the article because I think it is useful, not because I want to do anyone a favor. (I have purchased a VR-6 to replace a burned out regulator, and had one starter and at least one generator rebuilt by RBR, and, so far at least, everything has worked great.)

## GENERATORS & REGULATORS - A MINICOURSE

My business is the manufacture of solid state voltage regulators and the remanufacture of generators and starters - all for collector cars, mostly from the 6 volt era. It is easier and more satisfying to sell either of these services to an owner who has some knowledge of their operation. Most old car owners are so involved with the mechanical and cosmetic restoration of their vehicles that they are content to farm-out the less familiar electrical problems. And that is fine with me, but they can probably do a better job of subcontracting, if you will, with a better understanding of the beast they are dealing with. Hence my short primer on charging systems, which I hope will be informative.

Figure 1 shows the cross-section of a typical generator. Aside from the bearings, springs, holders and fasteners, the generator is comprised of 3 primary elements, i.e., (1) Field, (2) Armature and (3) Brushes.

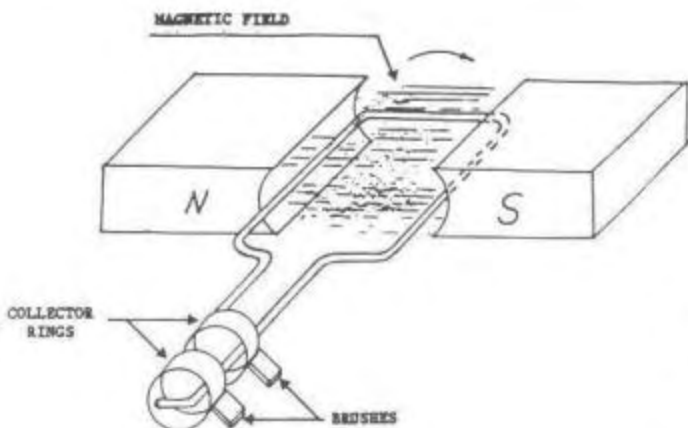


First, the field - in most automotive generators, the field consists of wire coils wound around cores of soft iron called pole shoes, which are in turn fastened to the inside of the generator housing or "frame". For simplicity we will examine a 2 pole generator with the brushes usually 180° opposite each other, as opposed to the less frequent 4 pole with brushes in a 90° configuration. The usual purpose of the latter design is charging capability at lower RPM.

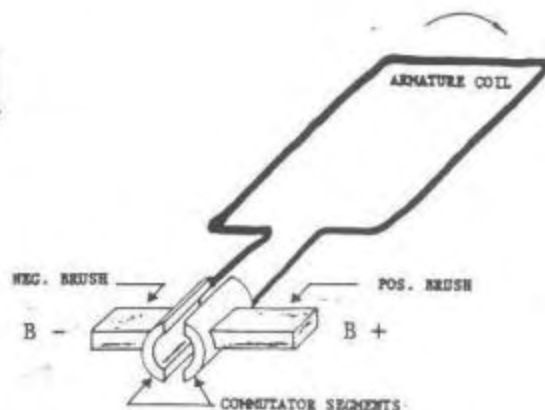
Soft iron is used for pole shoes because it is easily magnetized when the surrounding wire coils are energized. Thus each pole becomes a magnet when voltage is induced to the coils, creating the invisible lines of force or "field" between them as shown in Figure 2. Polarity of each pole is determined by the direction of both the coil-winding and the current flow within. Once the pole is de-energized, the magnetic field dissipates very rapidly with only enough residual magnetism in the pole shoes to permit the generator to start charging the next time the engine is started. This is why a new generator must sometimes be polarized to make it charge after installation, i.e., the poles have no residual magnetism or polarity. Together, then, the housing and poles (or field coils) comprise the "field".

Next the armature - if we take a loop (coil) of wire, position it in the magnetic field between the poles and rotate it to cut the lines of magnetic force (field), a voltage will be induced into our loop (Figure 3). For each 180° of rotation, the ends of our loop will reverse or "alternate" polarity because they will assume the polarity of the nearest pole, (+) or (-). At this point we have an alternator similar in theory to those on later model cars.





( FIG.3 )



( FIG.4 )

The current produced in all generators is an alternating (AC) flow of current that is "commutated" or changed to a direct (DC) flow of current by means of the commutator (Figure 4). In effect, the carbon brushes are connected to one end of the loop for  $\frac{1}{2}$  revolution and the other end for the next  $\frac{1}{2}$  revolution, so the polarity is always the same on the left and right hand brushes. With the brushes riding against the commutator, we can now call our loop of wire an "armature".

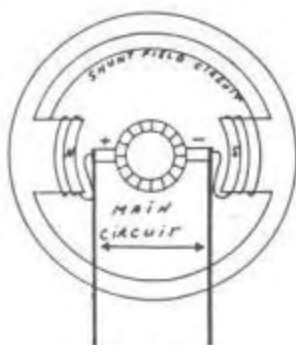
Obviously if we add more loops or coils of wire and more commutator segments, the whole process becomes more efficient. Some popular armatures have about 14 slots for coils and twice that number of commutator segments. The ends of each coil are soldered to a commutator bar or segment, each insulated from the other. In actuality the coils are overlapped, but the complexities of armature winding are not pertinent at this point. A look at Figure 1 will illustrate the above discussion. In summation, the actual voltage is produced by rotation of the armature coils cutting the magnetic "field". The more coils we have and the faster we turn them, the higher the voltage and of course the more amps or current generated.

It is important to differentiate between voltage and current. Common terms for voltage are EMF (Electromotive Force) or Potential. Voltage is a pressure or force. Voltage pushes electrons through a wire as pressure pushes water through a pipe. Current, on the other hand, is the rate of flow of electrons through a wire similar to cubic feet of water per minute through a pipe. One ampere of current equals  $6.3 \times 10^{18}$  electrons flowing across a given point per second, the factor your dash ammeter measures. The point being that we want to replace electrons drained from the battery as quickly as practical. A starter consumes 80 to 120 amps, lights 12 to 18, ignition 2 to 3, etc. X time of usage.

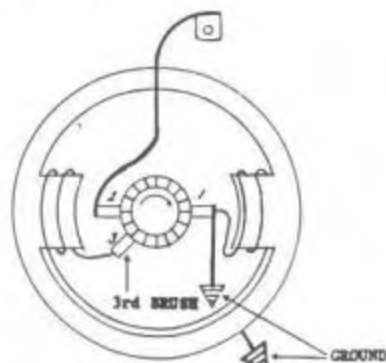
Another factor or by-product of concern here is the friction and resultant heat produced by the voltage (pressure) pushing current (flow) through the wires. Because most generators are shunt wound (Figure 5), about 10% of the current produced by the armature flows through the field windings (pole coils). As the armature turns faster, more current is produced and as the field draws some of this current, it becomes stronger. As the field gains strength, the armature produces increasing voltage and current until heat overcomes the generator with the commutator bars becoming so hot that solder holding the armature coils melts. Centrifugal force of the spinning armature throws the solder around the inside of the housing and the armature coil wires become disconnected. Therefore, the shunt wound generator must be controlled or it can eventually self-destruct!

The generator is a direct current machine and possesses the necessary parts to become a DC motor. One bench test is to "motor" the generator by connecting battery leads directly to it. Because it is a motor and is connected indirectly to the battery in the auto, the battery would run down trying to "motor" the generator when the engine was stopped. Therefore some sort of switch must be utilized to stop the current flow from the battery to the generator. Thus, the "cut-out" was devised

with no other regulative purpose than to disconnect the generator from the battery. Comprised of 2 coils, springs, points and a frame, it permits voltage generated above that residual in the battery, after the car is started, to charge the battery via closed points. When generator speed is slowed or stopped and generator output voltage drops below battery voltage, the points open so the battery does not drain it's stored current into the field windings. Should the points stick open while the generator is producing substantial current, it will burn out very quickly per previous discussion. Defective cut-outs have caused more generators to find their way to the junk yard or repair shop than any other cause.



( FIG. 5 )



( FIG. 6 )

The cut-out alone will not suffice as, again, some method of regulating generator output is mandatory for generator longevity (less sustained heat) and battery life (less overcharging). The first method was the 3rd movable brush, which became very popular for several years. The theory was to connect one end of the field to the 3rd brush instead of the main brush (Figure 6). By making the added brush adjustable, the field connection to it can be moved to a different point on the commutator, thus missing some of the commutator segments so the field does not get the full current produced by the armature, in turn causing a deterioration of the field. The further the 3rd brush is moved from the main brush, the less current the generator can produce.

As generator speed increases, the magnetic field tends to twist or distort in the direction of armature rotation creating a phenomenon called armature reaction. Without getting too involved, by use of the 3rd brush, the speed of the generator rotation actually deteriorates it's own magnetic field as mentioned above. For this reason, regardless of speed, the generator will not produce more current than the 3rd brush is adjusted for. The main advantage was then fixed or constant current at high speeds. By the same token, however, the by-product of heat produced in a generator charging at a fairly high rate of 10 amps, for example, becomes a factor in longevity and performance of the component. Also, the 3rd brush design has a tendency to charge a well charged battery at the same rate as a discharged battery, leading to overcharging. A better idea is to taper off the charging rate as the battery approaches full charge.

As time progressed, the 2 stage regulator evolved comprised of a cut-out and usually a current regulator. With the second regulating stage, a relay becomes operative when voltage reaches a high point and inserts a resistance in the field causing a voltage drop. Naturally the field becomes weaker and the generator produces less current. The advantages were protection of the generator by limiting it's maximum current while permitting a slightly higher charging rate through the third brush for higher demand from the electrical system.

There were several vibrating regulators, some for voltage and others for current. Delco built a vibrating lamp load regulator that allowed higher generator output when the lights were in use. Similarly, in 1934-5 Chevy had a resistor on the light switch that was not in series with the field when the switch was on, permitting

higher voltage to be generated. There were regulators controlled by thermostats; an early Bijur generator had a thermostat built in for hot and cold weather driving. The variations were many because everyone wanted to solve the problem of not overcharging the battery, but having enough current to run the lights and accessories without burning up the generator. One set of circumstances for daytime and night driving----- or hot and cold weather, as examples.

Eventually the 3 stage regulator won out and proved to be the answer. It is comprised of a cut-out, current regulator and voltage regulator.

The cut-out has been explained. The current and voltage regulators work as a team, one to control current so the generator does not exceed it's load capabilities and the other to control voltage for optimum battery charge and life. This system worked well for many years until the advent of the alternator. The disadvantage was that, with time and use, the mechanical parts such as springs lost their tension and points became pitted. Once a mechanical regulator was out of adjustment, it was difficult to put in back to original specs. Unfortunately, the transistor did not evolve until about 1947. Had early designers been able to make use of solid state devices, certainly the electromechanical regulator would have been replaced much sooner.

The latest is a solid-state regulator utilizing state-of-the-art technology. No coils, points, springs or moving parts to wear out or deteriorate on the shelf. It will not corrode, and above all, can be used on all 2 or 3 brush generators including those that employed only a cut-out. The VR-6, for example, is totally solid-state with adjustable voltage and current limiting plus solid-state switching to replace the cut-out function.

Now that I have hopefully imparted some insight into the mysteries of the auto charging system, let me talk a bit about my services based on 20 years in electronics and former ownership of collector cars.

First, I manufacture the VR-6 solid-state regulators for 6 volt systems. I developed this item after being challenged by friends in the Ohio Chrysler Touring Club to provide something better than the antiquated mechanical cutouts and regulators that caused them to destroy 3 generators over the 1983 tour season. This product is a truly modern solid-state device that maintains a 6 volt battery at the optimum 7 + volt level, permits higher charging rates below that point and minimizes charging beyond that level to negate battery overcharging, save generator wear and reduce horsepower consumption. Did you know that a generator charging at 20 amps will appreciably slow a 2 HP single phase motor? Generator heat and horsepower consumption increase from near zero as output increases. This is particularly true of any system with a fairly constant charging rate above a certain speed. Consider the factors of generator wear, battery over-charge and horsepower effort at a constant 10 amps charging rate!

It should be noted here that this product is not to be confused with the \$7 - \$15 diode sold to replace the innards of a cutout. That type diode, frankly, is a 50 cent item that performs no regulative function and usually is short lived in the heated environment of a generator mounted cut-out case. In contrast, the VR-6 is comprised of sealed solid-state circuitry mounted within a heat sink and intended for hidden installation away from the hot engine compartment. Original cut-out and regulator cases and wiring remain intact for authentic appearance. Modern technology for old wheels!

A second service I provide is the custom remanufacturing of generators, alternators and starters for the collector car hobby. I am not a production repair shop with minimum repair and testing performed. I start with complete disassembly, glass bead



cleaning, repainting and component testing. Field coils and armatures are reinsulated or rewound as required. Necessary machining is done and reassembly completed with new bearings, springs, brushes, holders, etc. Full testing is done across appropriate electronic equipment to insure OEM spec performance. Your component is ready to install as like-new in mechanics and appearance. Turn around time is usually less than one week and I may be able to immediately exchange popular models.

Preclude the expense and inconvenience of a road failure by having your components put into 1st class condition for many miles of trouble-free, enjoyable touring.

Call RBR Electronics (Ron Lekse) at 216-585-7178 for details. My quality, guarantee and your total satisfaction are my best advertising to the hobby. You are welcome to visit my facilities as an individual or with your club. I hope my brief critique will make you a more knowledgeable owner, driver ---- and customer!

Let RBR help you "generate" some ----- HAPPY MOTORING!!

NOTE: Any legitimate car club is welcome to reproduce this article - only in it's entirety, please.

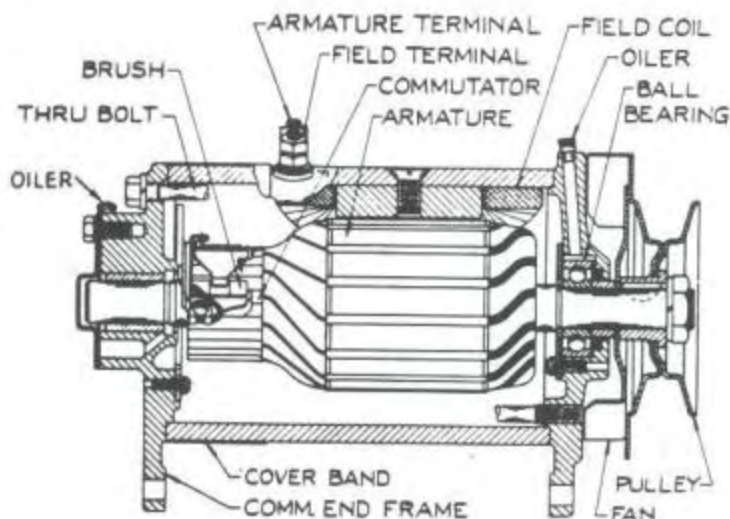


Fig. 12-12. Generator—All Series

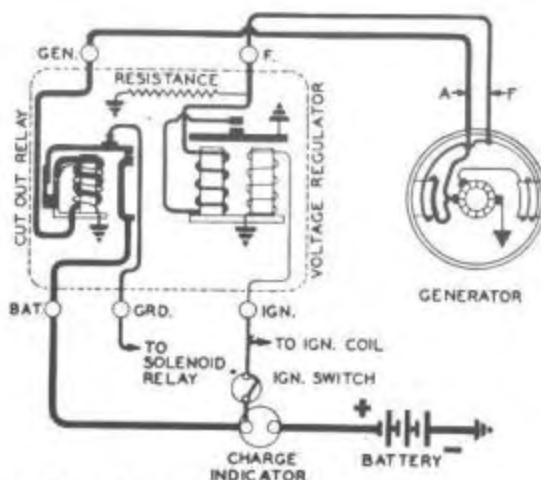


Fig. 12-16. Circuit Diagram Voltage Regulator Unit—All Series



# Classified Ads



## PARTS FOR SALE

1937 model 47: new headliner-\$50; trunk handle-\$15; front shocks-\$100; dash gauge assy.-\$35; water pumps-\$20; sunvisors-\$10; many other parts. Anyone looking for paint chips, give a call; I will loan; also info on woodgraining. RICH GAGLIARDI (#888). 1526 Pelican Lane, Vero Beach, FL 32963. 407/231-5205.

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1937 mostly series 40, some series 60 parts; mostly front end & engine parts, plus other miscellaneous. Send for list. LEO AMARANTES (former member). 66 Haskell St., Fall River, MA 02720

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37/38 auxilliary radio speaker-\$35; 37/38 door latch stiker plates, brass repro-\$20 set of 4; 34-39 40 series timing chain. NOS Perfection Gear Co.-\$30; 38 instrument cluster face plate, needs paint-\$5; 37 40 series front engine mounts, rebuilt-\$30 set; 37 40/60 series wiper motor, needs rebuild-\$15; 37/38 40 series NOS generator armature-\$15; 34-37 40 series NOS U-joint-\$75; 37-39 NOS manifold heat riser valve body, 40 series-\$175; 37/38 40/60 series front wheel cylinder NOS-\$20; 36/37 40 series rear wheel cylinders, bodies only, new NAPA-\$30 pair; 37 40 series master cylinder, Wagner Lockheed, needs rebuild-\$15; 37/38 40/60 series front wheel cylinders, bodies only, sleeved with brass-\$40 pair; 37/38 60 series master cylinder, needs cleaning-\$35; 37 40/60 series inner front wheel bearings, new-\$20 pair; 37 40 series king pin kit, new NAPA-\$20; 37-48 40 series connecting rods, good used-\$40 set of 8; GM GUIDE Super-Ray passing lamps, probably circa 1940 good condition but need plating for show, rare-\$350 pair; 37 80/90 series front bumper, needs straightening & plating-\$25; 37 80 series rear end parts, including housings, axle shafts, brake drums, one ring & pinion set (worn but could be used), other stuff, some will fit 90 series and/or 38-CALL; 37 80 series torque tube & drive shaft-CALL; 37 80 series transmission, condition unknown-\$50. SHIPPING EXTRA. Parts too large or heavy for UPS-you pick up, or I might deliver within 350-400 miles of Columbus at your expense. BILL OLSON (#427). 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235. 614/436-7579 home; 614/687-3041 office.

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TRADE front bumper horseshoe guard for BUICK 8 bumper badge. Condition considered, BOB MacDONALD (#540). 163 Main St., Erin, Ontario NOB 1T0 Canada. 519/833-9150.

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Pair, Trippe lights, jubiors, no brackets-\$100; '38 Century radiator-\$100; '37 radio NOS-\$150; '37/'38 gas tank NOS 40/60 series-\$250; '37 rear seat heater NOS (GM)-\$300; '37 grille, needs repair-\$50; '37 Buick literature & memorabilia. Getting out of the hobby after 25 years; many other parts for '37 & '38; send want list with SASE. BOB LOCKWOOD (#184) 2250 Columbia Circle, Henderson, NV 89014. 702/898-0640.



1937 Roadmaster convertible sedan, model 80-C: pair of center support posts for top-\$425; rear window-\$100; cowl & convertible windshield posts (make a convertible or town car from your sedan)-\$250; pair side-mount fenders with covers, stainless, etc.-\$850; pair rear fenders-\$200; heavier convertible chassis-\$300; recast banjo steering wheel-\$200; deck lid or hood half-\$50; rusty doors-\$65 ea; sedan doors, rust-free-\$50 ea; rust-free sedan floor & rear clip-\$350. More available; please send SASE with inquiries. DAVID POWERS (#894). 27732 Paseo Barona, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. 714/493-1199.

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1937 60 series unless otherwise noted. Gas pedal, needs rubber-\$2; dash gauge assy., no gas or temp, new Bob's repro face-\$40; 2 lower A-frames with spindle mounts-\$20 ea; dash clock guts, no face or hands-\$5; steering linkage complete with center link & tie rod ends-\$35; 2 front spindles modified to use Camaro disc brakes-\$20 ea; 4 NOS replacement arms for A-frames with threaded bushings-\$35 ea; 2 rebuilt front shocks with about 300 miles-\$75 ea; front sway bar-\$20; sidemount covers, either 80 or 90 series-\$700 set. GREG MARSHALL (#148). 31732 Via Madonna, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. 714/661-4789.

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Hats....one size fits all....\$11.00      Shipping for any order...\$3.00

\*\*\*\*\* Profits after expenses have been met will go to the Club \*\*\*\*\*

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## PARTS WANTED

1938 Special coupe, series 40. Need upper transmission mount, one front engine mount bolt, lower gas tank mount brackets, heater, one set left door hinges, ignition switch. Have various engine parts for possible trade. BILL SUDDERTH (#889). 4204 Misty Meadow Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 76133. 817/346-6220.

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Need rear fender right side, '38 40/60; frame with latch attached for right side rear vent window, model 47 or 67 (plain-back 4-door). BILL PATTERSON (#928). Box 100, Placentia, NFDL AOB 2Y0 Canada. 709/227-2340.



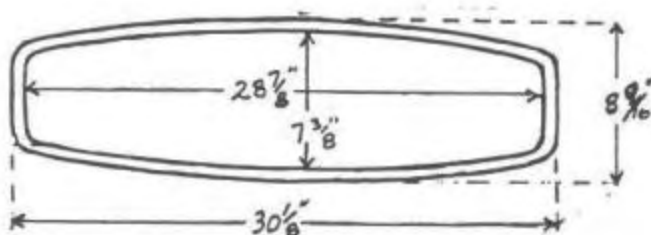
1937 all series: working temperature gauge, vacuum starter switch. GENE McCOY (#573). 20 Raff Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001. 516/354-0210.

HELP! INFORMATION WANTED: I would appreciate a procedure used to replace the front and rear motor mounts with the engine still in place in the car. Mine is a 60-series, if that makes any difference. GENE McCOY (#573). 20 Raff Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001. 516/354-0210.

WANTED: both exhaust manifolds for small series 1941-2 with compound carb intake. BILL SAVINO (#915). 1530 Jill Jenee Lane, Longwood, FL 32779. 407/682-7205.

'37/'38 sidemount monograms "BUICK" & face plate circular trim; '37 nose center strip emblem. Fair condition or better. ALBERT NETTUNO (#869). 3060 S. Decatur Blvd., #1-15, Las Vegas, NV 89102. 702/873-7775

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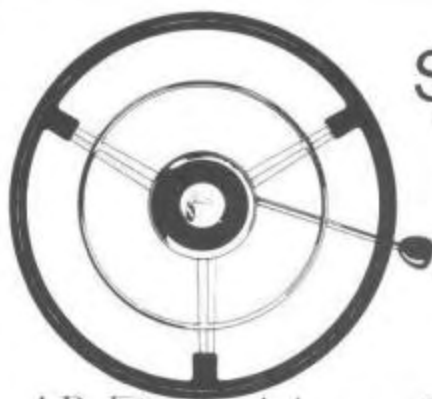
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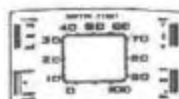
RADIO.....RG-37.....\$23.

CLOCK.....CG-37.....\$28.

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RADIO.....RG-38.....\$23.

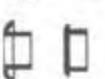
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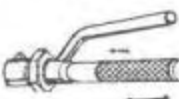
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